

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 23, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin:

We are writing to request that you exercise your authority to support installation resilience¹ in order to provide funding to support replacement of the federally-owned bridge that provides the only land-based access to and from Joint Base Cape Cod.²

Joint Base Cape Cod “is a full scale, joint-use base home to five military commands training for missions at home and overseas, conducting airborne search and rescue missions, and intelligence command and control.”³ Its contributions to military readiness include Camp Edwards, “the primary military training facility for National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers throughout New England.”⁴ It also has “the only land based radar site providing missile warning for the eastern coast of the United States.”⁵ A recent analysis found the base is responsible for more than five thousand Massachusetts jobs and generated more than \$611.7 million in economic impact.⁶

Unlike 98 percent of bridges on public roads in the United States,⁷ the Cape Cod bridges were built by and have been continuously owned and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.⁸ The bridges were built with an expected lifespan of 50 years.⁹ Unfortunately, these bridges now “are nearly 90 years old, functionally obsolete, and no longer meet the needs of the traveling public.”¹⁰ Even worse, the Bourne Bridge has been classified as “structurally deficient.”¹¹ According to a 2020 engineering report by the U.S. Army Corps, replacement is

¹ 10 U.S.C. §2815

² Joint Base Cape Cod, “Access,” <https://www.massnationalguard.org/JBCC/access.html>.

³ Joint Base Cape Cod, <https://www.massnationalguard.org/JBCC/>.

⁴ Joint Base Cape Cod, <https://www.massnationalguard.org/JBCC/>.

⁵ Joint Base Cape Cod, <https://www.massnationalguard.org/JBCC/>.

⁶ MassDevelopment, UMass Amherst Donahue Institute, “Massachusetts Military Installations: Economic Contributions and Linkages to the Massachusetts Economy,” December 2021, p. 25.

⁷ Congressional Research Service, “Highway Bridges: Conditions, Funding Programs, and Issues for Congress, July 25, 2022, p. 1, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47194>.

⁸ WBUR, “Agreement Reached to Replace Cape Canal Bridges,” Chris Lisinski, July 7, 2020, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/07/07/bourne-sagamore-bridges-cape-cod-ownership-transfer>.

⁹ Tufts Now, “Why New Bridges Are Needed to Cape Cod,” Kalimah Redd Knight, November 6, 2019, <https://now.tufts.edu/2019/11/06/why-new-bridges-are-needed-cape-cod>.

¹⁰ Massachusetts Department of Transportation, “Cape Bridges,” <https://www.mass.gov/cape-bridges>.

essential for safety and accessibility.¹² While the Army Corps is responsible for the bridges, a project of this magnitude requires an all hands on deck funding approach from the federal government.

The fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act expanded your authority to support projects that increase installation resilience,¹³ providing as much as \$100 million in any fiscal year.¹⁴ Specifically, by law, you are authorized to carry out projects outside of a military installation or facility if you determine the project “would preserve or enhance the resilience” of a military installation or of community infrastructure “determined by the Secretary concerned to be necessary to maintain, improve, or rapidly reestablish installation mission assurance and mission-essential functions.”¹⁵

It’s clear that these bridges are essential to preserving Joint Base Cape Cod’s mission-essential functions. As the Army’s guidance on this provision notes, disruptions create “a ‘weak link’ . . . to generate strategic readiness.”¹⁶ To be sure, we have already advocated with the White House, state and federal Departments of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies to make this project a priority.¹⁷ Given Joint Base Cape Cod’s contributions to our national defense strategy and protection of the homeland, we urge the Department of Defense also to contribute to its resilience by providing a portion of the funding to replace the Cape Cod Canal Bridges.

¹¹ MassDot, “Cape Cod Bridges Program: Purpose and Need Statement,” August 2022, p. 2, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/cape-cod-bridges-program-purpose-and-need-statement/download>.

¹² U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, “Cape Cod Canal Highway Bridges, Bourne, Massachusetts,” March 2020, p. 146, <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Portals/74/docs/Topics/Cape%20Cod%20Canal%20Bridges/Reports/FinalMRERDocument.pdf>.

¹³ Fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, (Public Law 116-238), Section 315, <https://uscode.house.gov/statviewer.htm?volume=134&page=3514>.

¹⁴ Congressional Research Service, “Military Construction: Authorities and Processes,” April 28, 2023, p. 9, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R44710.pdf>.

¹⁵ 10 U.S.C. §2815 (c)(3)

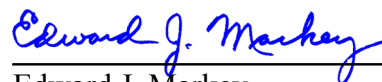
¹⁶ U.S. Army, “Army Installations Strategy: Supporting the Army in Multiple Domains,” December 2020, p. 11, https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN32810-SD_07_STRATEGY_NOTE_2020-01-000-WEB-1.pdf.

¹⁷ Letter from Senator Warren, Senator Markey, and Representative Keating to James L. Tesler, Acting Secretary of Transportation for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, January 27, 2023, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2023.01.27%20Letter%20to%20MassDOT%20re%20cape%20cod%20bridges.pdf>; Letter from Senator Warren, Senator Markey, and Representative Keating to Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and Shalanda Young, director of the Office of Management and Budget, January 27, 2023, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/23.01.27%20Markey-Warren-Keating%20Letter%20on%20Corps%20Funding.pdf>; Office of Senator Warren, “Warren, Markey, Keating Secure \$350 Million in President Biden’s Budget to Replace Cape Cod Bridges,” March 9, 2023, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-markey-keating-secure-350-million-in-president-bidens-budget-to-replace-cape-cod-bridges>.

Sincerely,



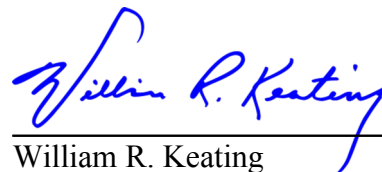
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress